

The Wrath of Man praising GOD.

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
High Church of *Edinburgh*,
May 18th, 1746.

Before His GRACE the
Lord High Commissioner

T O T H E
General Assembly of the CHURCH
of S C O T L A N D.

By HUGH BLAIR, A. M.
One of the Ministers of *Canongate*.

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To the Right Honourable

ALEXANDER

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To the RIGHT HONOURABLE
ALEXANDER
Earl of L E V E N,
HIS MAJESTY'S
HIGH COMMISSIONER
TO THE
General Assembly of the Church of
SCOTLAND;

This S E R M O N is inscrib'd, with the
highest Respect and Esteem, by

His Grace's most obliged,

most humble, and

most obedient Servant,

HUGH BLAIR.

To the Right Honourable

ALEXANDER

Earl of LIVENING

The Marquis's

HIGH COMMISSIONER

TO THE



The Earl of Livening is invited, with the

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the British Museum

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PSALM lxxvi. 10.

*Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee: the
remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

IN this Psalm some remarkable Victory and Deliverance is celebrated, which the *Jewish* Nation had obtained: A Deliverance in which the Hand of God visibly appeared, rescuing his People from imminent Danger. Very probably it was written in *Hezekiah's* Reign, on Occasion of their being delivered from the formidable Invasion of *Sennacherib* and the *Assyrian* Army; when the Angel of the Lord, in one Night, discomfited all their Host, and smote them with sudden Destruction (a). To this signal

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(a) 2 Kings xix. 35.

Interposition of the Divine Arm, these Expressions in the Context may be naturally applied; *There brake he the arrows of the bow, the shield, the sword, and the battle ---- the stout-hearted are spoiled: They have slept their sleep; and none of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and the horse are cast into a dead sleep.* In the Words of our Text, we have the Psalmist's religious and wise Reflection upon all these Events; upon the violent Designs of their Enemies, and the Issue to which Providence brought these Designs; *Surely, the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.*

The wrath of man; that is, all the Rage, and the impetuous Passion of wicked Men; with the violent Effects of War, Persecution, Oppression, and other Disorders it produces in the World. All these the Psalmist tells us, *shall praise God*: Not indeed, by the Intention and Design, nor by the native Tendency, of the *wrath of man*: But by these wise and good Purposes, which the Providence of God causes it to *accomplish*; from this Poison *extracting* Health; and of Things, most unwilling and unapt in themselves to yield him Glory,

ry, *forming* Instruments of Good. So that, tho' the *wrath of man*, as the Apostle *James* speaks, *worketh not, of itself, the righteousness of God* (a), it is nevertheless, *forced and compelled* to minister to his *Praise*. The Psalmist adds, *the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain*: That is, God will give Way to the Wrath of Man, and allow it Scope, *so far* as it answers his good Purposes, and works his Praise; the rest of it shall be curb'd and bound up: When it would attempt to go beyond its prescrib'd Limit, he says to it, as to the Waters of the Sea, *Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stay-ed* (b). All this, the last Issue of Things shall fully verify and declare: When we shall be able more clearly to trace the divine Administration through its several Steps, by seeing the Consummation of the whole. In some Cases, it may be reserved for this Period only, to disclose and unfold the mysterious Wisdom of Heaven. But in general, as much of the divine Conduct and Wisdom, is at present manifest, as gives just Ground for this Observation, that the *wrath of man praises God*, now, before the whole World. This was the Me-
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(b) Jam. i. 20. (c) Job xxxviii. 11.

dition of the Psalmist after Victory and Conquest. As we, my Brethren, like him, have lately seen the *wrath of man* raging around us, in all its Violence; and in the midst of its Fury have seen it restrain'd and check'd by the powerful Hand of GOD; such a Meditation, must be acknowledged very suitable and becoming now: That by serious Contemplation of the Ways of Providence, we may learn to view these Revolutions which befall Mankind, with the devout Sentiments of our Psalmist.

IN prosecuting this Subject, I shall endeavour to illustrate and confirm the Observation in my Text; by showing in what Manner the *wrath of man* is made to *praise God*. And then I shall lead your Thoughts to the Improvement we ought to make of such a Meditation.

THE different Ways, in which the *wrath of man* turns out to the *praise of God*, are reducible chiefly to these three. I. As it *manifests* most brightly the glorious *Perfections* of GOD in the Government of the Universe. II. As it *illustrates* and *improves* the *Virtues* of good Men; and thus *beautifies* his Church and People. And, III. As it is made the
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Means of *working* out their greater *Prosperity* and *Happiness*, upon the whole.

I. I say, the *wrath of man praises God*, as it gives Occasion for the brighter and more illustrious *Discovery of his Perfections*, in the *Government* of the World.---The *Beauty and Order* of the Universe is much heighten'd, by its being so complicated a System: In which, there are such a Variety of Springs to be adjusted; and so many different Movements to be regulated and kept in Order: Interfering Interests and jarring Passions *ballanc'd*, in such Manner, against one another; violent and unruly Men kept under such a wise and regular *Controul*; and the *wrath of man* made so to know its *Place*; that, how opposite soever the several Motions seem to be, yet they *concur* and meet at last in one End. This renders a Divine Hand *sensible* and *illustrious*: This opens a more wonderful Prospect of the Divine Government, than if all its Subjects were loyal, and willingly obedient; and makes that Power and Wisdom, which can render such *intractable* Things subservient to the Ends of Justice and Goodness, appear so much the more worthy of everlasting Admiration and Praise. More particularly,

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I. **THE** *wrath of man* redounds to the Praise of GOD's *almighty Power*; as this is display'd in his restraining and baffling at Pleasure all its Fury and Wickedness.---To reign with sovereign Command, amidst the most disorder'd and turbulent State of Things, is the peculiar Glory of Omnipotence. Hence we find GOD describ'd in Scripture as *sitting on the flood, riding on the wings of the wind, dwelling in the darkness and the tempest. As he stills the raging of the seas, and the noise of their waves, so, he stills the tumults of the people.* When the Passions of Men are most *agitated and inflamed*, and their violent Designs just ripe for bursting into Execution; how oft by some unforeseen Turn of Providence, hath he call'd upon Mankind to observe, that there is one *higher than the highest on Earth*, who can baffle all their Devices with the Breath of his Mouth; and command the Earth *to be still before him*? When proud Fleets cover the Ocean, he blows with his Wind, and they are scattered. When mighty Armies go forth to Battle, in all the Glory of human Strength, with what *Majesty* does an omnipotent Arm sometimes appear? ---As in the Case of haughty *Sennacherib*,
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and that boasted Tempest of Wrath he threatened to pour upon all the *Jewish Nation*: *I will put my hook, says GOD, in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest (a)*. In that Night the destroying Angel smote the Host: And he departed, we are told, with *shame of face to his own land*. *When the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing; when the kings of the earth set themselves, and its rulers take counsel together; he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall hold them in derision: then shall he speak to them in wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure (b)*. Again,

2. THE *wrath of man* is made to praise the *Wisdom*, as well as the *Power of GOD*; when he makes the unruly *Passions of bad Men*, work in a secret Way, towards Ends, by them altogether unforeseen. This most eminently displays the unsearchable Depths of the *Divine Counsel*, when we see them render'd the *Ministers of Providence*, to forward Designs which they intended to destroy.---Thus, how surprising is it, in the History of *Joseph*, that the Cruelty of his Brethren, the Lewdness and

(a) 2 Kings xix. 29. (b) Psal. ii, 1, 2, 4, 5.

and Resentment of his Mistress, and the Wrath of *Potiphar*, should all *conspire* to his Advancement, and prove the *Steps*, by which this persecuted and friendless Man rose, till he became the Saviour of all his Kindred? How remarkably did the *wrath of man* praise God in the case of *Daniel*? The Malice of his Enemies had thrown him into the Den of Lions for worshipping God; they presumed his Destruction accomplish'd; and themselves completely delivered from so formidable a Rival; yet this very Event prov'd not only the Occasion of *Daniel's* greater Honour, and their utter Ruin, but of a Decree through all the Kingdom of the *Medes*, that all Men should worship and fear before the God of *Daniel* (a). Thus God *snareth the wicked in the works of their hands* (b): And erects his own Counsel upon the Ruin of theirs. These Things which, view'd apart, appear to us *Spots* in the divine Administration, when considered in their *Connection* with all the Train of succeeding Events, often add a great *Lustre* and *Beauty* to it. Were our Views extensive enough, we should discern it always to be thus.

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(a) Dan. vi. 25. (b) Psal. ix. 16.

3. I might observe further, that the *wrath of man* praises the *Goodness* of GOD; in all these Purposes of general *Benefit*, both *temporal* and *spiritual*, to which his Providence renders it subservient. But these will fall to be afterwards considered; I therefore proceed to observe,

4. THAT the *wrath of man* is made to praise the Divine *Justice*.---In many Cases it is sufficient for this End, that GOD let loose upon bad Men, for their own *Punishment*, these angry Passions, which make them the Disturbers of others. By giving them up to the Workings of these, he opens a Source of restless Pain within their Breasts; and delivers them over to themselves, to be their own *Tormentors*. In thus *connecting* the Punishment with the Crime, causing their *own wickedness to reprove them, and their backslidings to correct them*, the Hand of Justice is plainly seen. And tho' the Sinner that *feels* it, may affect to disguise his Suffering, yet every one knows that no Punishment is more *real*, or more *intense*, than the *inward Misery* of a Mind, wrought and torn with *Despise, Revenge, or wrathful Passion*. In such a Case, we may understand that Say-

ing of the Psalmist to receive its Accomplishment; *The wicked have drawn out their sword, and bent their bow, to cast down the poor and needy;---but the sword which they have drawn shall enter into their own heart (a).* ---The *wrath of man* praises also the Divine Justice, by being the *Instrument* of punishing *other* ambitious and violent Men. They are let loose upon one another to fulfil the Vengeance of Heaven. One corrupt Nation is raised up against another; that *both* may suffer for their Sins. And as there can be no solid nor lasting Bond of Union amongst wicked Men, (tho' they may be occasionally cemented by Conspiracy against the Good) their continually interfering Views and Interests, render them, in the just *Judgment* of Providence, a Prey to mutual Jealousy, Strife and Fraud.---Finally, the Justice of God is praised in the *Vengeance*, which, sooner or later, he executes against the Wrath and Violence of Sinners. They may go on for a Time, and appear to prosper: The Justice of Heaven may seem to *slumber*: but it is *awake*: and only waits till the *measure of their iniquity be full*. How oft has the World been awakened to the Observation of the awful Government

(a) Psal. xxxvii. 14, 15.

vernment of God, by the sudden Fall and Destruction of Tyrants? God represents himself in Scripture, as permitting Wickedness sometimes to arise to an over-grown Height, on Purpose that its Ruin may be the *greater*, and the more *astonishing*. For this cause he tells that wicked Prince *Pharaoh*, he had raised him up, that is, allowed him to prosper and be exalted, that he might shew in him his power; and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth (a). The Divine Administration is glorified as well in the *strange Punishment* he hath decreed for the Workers of Iniquity, as in the *Reward* he hath prepared for the Righteous. This is the purpose which the Lord hath purposed upon all the earth; and this is the hand that is stretched forth over all the nations (b)!

Thus the wrath of man is made to praise God, by giving Mankind deep Impressions of that infinite Power, Wisdom and Justice, that governs the World. Such Impressions it is necessary for Mankind to have; and, in their present imperfect State, they can only receive them from something that is *sensible* and *striking*. The Commotions and Disorders of the World,

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(a) Exod. ix. 16. (b) Isa. xlv. 26.

open a Field for *signalizing* the Divine Administration more, than if all Things went on in a *quiet undisturbed* Tenor. The Waters must be sometimes *troubled*, that we may *attend* to that Hand which stills their Raging: and *Clouds* must arise, that the heavenly Light which dispels them, may *strike* our Eye with the more sensible *Brightness*. We further observed,

II. THAT the *wrath of man* may be justly said to praise GOD, by that Tendency which he gives it to *improve* and *illustrate* the *Virtues* of good Men; and thereby to *beautify* his Church and People. Now it hath this Effect,

1. As it is employed by GOD to be the Means of *correcting* good Men for their Faults. These *Storms*, which Ambition and Pride raise among Mankind, he permits, with the same Intention, that he sends forth *Tempests* and *Hurricanes* amongst the Elements; to clear the Atmosphere of noxious Vapours, and purify it from that *Corruption* which all Things contract by too much Rest. Bad Men appear sometimes to have obtained entire Power over the Just: they exercise their Tyranny, perhaps, with a very heavy and oppressive Hand:

Hand: the Just complain and groan; and in the Bitterness of their Soul, can hardly forbear to exclaim; "*Where is the Lord? And where the Sceptre of Righteousness and Truth? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Or doth he indeed see, and is there knowledge in the Most High?*"---Their Oppressors are really no more than the Instruments of God to them for Good: He sees they stand in Need of such Correction; and therefore raises them up Enemies, to cure the Intemperance of Prosperity; And by that Seriousness which Affliction is fitted to introduce into the Mind, to lead them to think of themselves, of their Duty, and their past Errors. In this Way the Disturbers of the Earth are often represented to us in Scripture; as *Scourges* in the Hand of God, sent forth to do his Work upon a degenerating People: They are employed in the Execution of righteous and wise Purposes, *concealed* from themselves; and, when their Commission is fulfilled, recalled and destroyed. Of this we have a remarkable Example in the King of *Assyria*. *I will send him, says God, against an hypocritical nation, and against the people of my wrath, will I give him a charge, to take the spoil and to take the prey:*
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---howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.---- Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks (a). Vainly then doth the wrath of man lift itself up against God.---- Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith? Or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? (b) ---- All things, whether they will or not, must work together for good to them that love God.--- This amongst the rest, fills up the Place assign'd it, by the Ordination of Heaven; ---- and the proudest Conqueror, and the most oppressive Tyrant, possess only the same Station, with the Famine, the Pestilence, and the Flood: their Triumphs are no more than the Accomplishment of God's Correction: And the remainder of their wrath shall be restrain.

2. GOD makes the wrath of man to praise him, not only by employing it in Chastisement, but as the Instrument of improving and signalizing the Graces of good Men; and there-

(a) Isa. x. 6, 7, 12. (b) Isa. x. 15.

thereby raising them to higher *Honour* and *Glory*.---- Had there been no Persecutors and Tyrants, no Oppressors of Liberty, no wrathful and furious Men in the World, what a Number of *great* and *worthy* Actions had never been heard of? What shining Examples of Fortitude, Constancy and Patience, had been lost to the World? What a Field of Virtues, *peculiar* to a State of Improvement and Discipline, had lain uncultivated? --- Spirits of a higher Order possess a State of *established* Virtue, that stands in Need of no such *Improvements* and *Trials*. But to *us*, who are only under Education for such a State, it *belongs* to pass through the Furnace, that our Souls may be *tried*, *refined*, and *brightened*. We must stand the *Conflict*, that we may be graced and crowned as *Conquerors*. The *wrath of man* gives the Occasion, and the Field; --- calls us forth to the most conspicuous and distinguished Exercise of *active* Virtue, --- and forms us to all those *suffering* Graces which are amongst the brightest Ornaments of the human Soul. When unjust Attempts are carried on against our publick Interests, these give us the Means of discovering true publick Spirit, and Love to our Country. When we suffer in our private Concerns,
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there our Enemies put it into our Power to gain the noblest Conquest, by overcoming the World ; and to make ourselves greater than the greatest Man who injures us, by forgiving him. When we suffer for the Sake of Truth and a good Conscience, there we have the desirable Opportunity afforded us, of gaining Honour truly immortal, by being Witnesses for God, and maintaining an exemplary and heroic Fidelity. In all this *the wrath of man praises God*.---Every single Instance, in which our Souls are improv'd, or some Action of distinguished Goodness is produced, by Means of *the wrath of man*, redounds most highly, both to our *own Good*, and to *his Praise*, who hath *order'd* Things in this Manner for our *Improvement*.---'Tis thus, the illustrious Band of Patriots and Heroes, of Confessors and Martyrs, have been set forth to the Admiration of all Ages, as *the lights of the world*: Whilst the Violence and Fury of Enemies, instead of bearing them down, has only serv'd to exalt and dignify them the more.---- We proceed now to the

III. VIEW we propos'd to give of the *wrath of man praising God*; when Providence makes

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it the Mean of *working* out greater *Prosperity* and *Happiness*, upon the whole, to his People and Church.---I say, the Violence of *Enemies*, the Rage of *Persecutors*, and the Oppression of *Tyrants*, not only tend, in the Way of moral and religious Improvement, to the *bettering* of our Souls; but also are often made, in their Consequences, to produce other unlook'd for Blessings to good Men *in this State*. As this is no rare nor unfrequent Thing, we shall point out some Instances in which it appears. Thus,

THE Hardships which good Men suffer from others in their *private* Concerns, are often seen to *give Birth* to their succeeding Prosperity. Many Exemplifications of this we find in History. The unfortunate Circumstances of *Moses's* Birth, thro' the Cruelty of an *Egyptian* Tyrant, were the Means of this exposed Infant's being bred up as a King's Son, and of his being *accomplish'd* for his future great Atchievements, with all the Wisdom and Learning of the *Egyptian* Court. The Insolence and proud Resentment of *Haman* pav'd the Way for the Advancement of *Mordecai* his Enemy, at the very critical Time when he thought his Designs ripe for sinking
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him into Ruin: And his cruel Scheme for the Destruction of *Mordecai's* whole Nation, prov'd the Occasion of their being raised above *all* their Enemies. *There are many devices in the heart of a man, but the counsel of the Lord shall stand (a).* He, connecting together each Link in the Chain of Events that fill up our Life, by an unexpected *Contexture* of Causes, makes those Things which we most deplore *bring on* our better Days: And, in the dark Bosom of Misfortune, gradually *ripens* the latent Seeds of future Prosperity. ----How frequently have the Attempts of Enemies to run down and *blacken* good Men by all the Arts of Malice, made their Character shine the *fairer* in the Eye of the impartial World? How frequently have the *Extremities* to which they have been driven by Injustice and Violence, prov'd the Occasion of calling forth their *Courage* and *Activity*, and of putting them upon such *Efforts* to do themselves Justice, as have raised them higher than ever they fell? How many, in the Course of their Life, have had Reason to be *thankful* for being disappointed by the Wrath of their Enemies, in Designs, which, perhaps, they very

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earnestly pursued; but which, if they had *successfully* accomplish'd, they have afterwards seen would have prov'd their *Ruin*? *Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord* (a).

BUT if thus, in *private* Life, the *wrath* of *man* is often made to praise God, by becoming the Occasion of greater Good; still more is the Hand of God apparent, in the Ends of *publick* Benefit it is made to serve, to *Nations* and *Societies*.---The Rage of Civil Wars, the Oppression of Tyrants, and all the other dismal Effects of the Ambition and Wrath of Man, have often sung the Praise of God to many succeeding Generations. Thence have been made to spring, publick *Liberty* to a People, wise *Government*, good *Order*, and lasting *Peace*. Nations have been thereby awaken'd to see their *true Interests*; and taught more effectually to *secure* them. Publick Affairs being once thrown into a *Ferment*, the Corruptions of Government, like bad Humours in the Body, have been purg'd and wrought off. The Feeling of grievous Oppression has frequently been the first Thing that made Nations *shake off* the *Yoke*; and
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led them to assert their own *just Rights* against tyrannical Governors; *which*, had their Tyranny been less insolent, these Nations would have remain'd longer, perhaps for ever, *depriv'd of*. Of this we have a memorable Example in the late glorious and happy *Revolution* in our own Country. Our Constitution, and its Liberties, might have been *insensibly undermined* and *ruined*, had it not been for the glaring and open Violation of Laws with a high Hand; which proclaiming all to be *then* at Stake, rouz'd up the Spirits of Men to make a determin'd Stand against incroaching *Tyranny*: and thus gave Birth to that *free* and *legal Establishment*, with which we at this Day are blessed; and for which, we hope, late Posterity after us, shall continue to bless the Providence of God. Had it not been for the *avow'd* Attempts then made against our Religion and our fundamental Rights, *Britain* might have been now under a *Popish* Sovereign: and, instead of that mild and temperate Administration we have enjoyed, under a Series of Princes who have always made the Law their Rule, we would have been the Subjects, or rather *Slaves*, of those who arrogantly claim us as their *Property* by *Divine Right*.

Right. In like Manner, the Tyranny and Violence of *Tarquin*, produced the illustrious and victorious Commonwealth of *Rome*. The Oppression of the King of *Spain*, laid the Foundation of the Liberty of the *United Provinces*; and Liberty, from a few inconsiderable Fisher-towns, has raised them to the most flourishing Height of Trade and Opulence.---As to the first *Establishment* of Freedom, so to the further *Security* of a publick Interest, unjust and violent Designs have been often subservient. Attempts to *overthrow* a good Government, have generally *strengthened* it more. By these its false Friends are *unmasked* and brought to Light; its secret Foes suffer for their Treachery: the *Zeal* of its Well-wishers is awakened and increased; and, from what is felt of the *Violence* and *Outrage* of its Enemies, People are more confirm'd in *Abhorrence* of their Designs, and made more justly to prize the Blessings of *Tranquillity* and *legal Protection*.

FURTHER, the *wrath of man*, in the *Persecution* of Religion and Truth, signally praises God, when it is made to turn to the greater *Advancement* of Religion, and further Propagation of Truth.---The Church of God, since
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the Days of its Infancy, hath never been free from the World's Wrath ; and yet, in these Ages in which it was most *persecuted*, it hath most *flourished*. In vain, the Policy and the Rage of the World united their Strength, to extinguish this Divine Light. Tho' all the four Winds blew against it, it only shone the brighter, and flam'd the higher : *Many waters could not quench it, nor all the floods drown it* : and the Blood of the Martyrs, as has been often and justly said, was the Seed of the Church. The *Zeal* of the primitive Christians, their *Constancy* and *Fortitude* in giving Testimony to Truth, and their chearful *Patience* in suffering for it, did much more to *increase* the Number of Converts to true Religion, than all the *Terror* and *Cruelty* of Persecutors could ever do to *lessen* it. The Attempts that were used to bear down Religion, only enlarg'd its Triumphs, by displaying the victorious Force of Truth. By this Means the *wrath of man* was made to turn *against itself*, to the Destruction of its own Purpose ;---like Waves, that, assailing a Rock with impotent Fury, discover its immoveable Stability, whilst they dash themselves in Pieces at its Feet. Prosperity, Greatness, and worldly Fa-

Favour may have corrupted Religion, and sullied the Purity of the Church : But, never did the *wrath of man* try to overthrow it, but in the Issue it made its own Weakness appear ; and rais'd the *praise of God*, by purifying the Church, and advancing Religion more.

I SHALL only add one Instance more of the *wrath of man* praising GOD, by accomplishing Ends of most extensive Benefit : and that is, *the Death of JESUS CHRIST*.---Never did Malice, Rage and Envy please themselves with the Thoughts of having obtain'd a more complete Triumph, than in this Case. JESUS was now put to Death ; the Revenge of his Enemies gratified ; his Name and his Honour, they believ'd, rooted out from amongst Men ;---yet, behold how vain the *wrath of man* is ! all that they intended to overthrow, they most effectually confirm'd. The *Ignominy* of the Cross became the Standard of *eternal Honour* to CHRIST, and his Religion : and his *Death*, perpetrated by them as a wicked Murder, was, in the Counsel of GOD, the Spring of *everlasting Life* to all his Followers. He, who *restrains the Remainder of Wrath* at his Pleasure, suffer'd their Rage to suggest no *other* Things to them, than

than what himself had long before determin'd, and his Prophets foretold, should be so done. So that they all *conspir'd* to render the whole most exactly conformable to his *original Plan* of Mercy and Goodness; and each contributed his *Share*, to finish that great Work, which none of them *knew* any thing of, nor in the least *intended*. --- So *glorious* an Instance as this, fully *ascertain'd* and laid out to us in Scripture, of the *wrath of man* ministring to the gracious Designs of Heaven, ought to have the greatest Weight; as an *Exemplification* of the Conduct of Providence in many *other Cases*, where we have not so much Light afforded us for the Discovery of its Ways.

AND now, by this Induction of Particulars, you see, upon the whole, how much Ground there is for asserting, that the *wrath of man shall praise God*; --- that all the Disorders which the Passion and Pride of Men occasion in the World, tho' they take their first *Rise* from the Corruption of human Nature, are so *order'd*, as to become Parts of a wise and good Constitution, redounding to his Honour and Glory, who hath order'd all. --- Either illustrating before the World, his *Divine Perfections*,

fections, in the Government of Things; --- or serving the Purposes of *moral* and *religious Improvement* to the Souls of Men; --- or by some secret Tendency, *working out Prosperity and Happiness* to those whom they seem most to threaten with Suffering and Evil. --- Surely, O GOD, *the wrath of man shall praise thee! the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain!* "In thy Hand it is; and thou never lets it forth but in *Weight and Measure*. It is *wild* and *intractable* in its Nature; but thou *tamest* it: *blind* and *headlong* in its Impulse; but thou *directest* it: ever *struggling* to break its Chain, knowing no Bounds; but thou *confinest* it: Thou *retrenchest* all the *Superfluity of its Fury!*" ----- Let us now consider, what is the Improvement to be made of this Meditation on the Ways of Providence.

1. Let it lead us to a religious Contemplation of the *Hand of God*, in all the Occurrences and Transactions of the World. We behold a very mixed and busy Scene of Things passing before us: the Passions of Men variously agitated; and new Changes daily brought forth upon this Stage of Time. We behold Peace and War taking their Turns: the

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Fortunes of private Men rising and falling : and Nations and Kingdoms partaking in the same Fluctuation and Vicissitude. In all this, if we look no farther than to the Operation of external Causes, and the mere Rotation of Events, we behold only the dead Side of Nature ; --- stop at the Surface of Things ; --- contemplate them not like rational and religious Beings. The *Life* and *Beauty* of the Universe arises from the View of that Wisdom and Goodness, which *animates* and *conducts* the whole ; and *unites* all the Parts in one great Design. There is an eternal Mind that puts all these Wheels in Motion ; himself remaining for ever at Rest. Of him we are to conceive not as removed from this World ; sitting, a mere Spectator of his Creatures, in his high Abode : but as an omnipresent Spirit, *pervading, directing, and regulating* all ; ever busy without *Toil*, and working without *Weariness* ! Nothing is void of him : even in the Passions and Ragings of Men, God is to be found : and when they think they guide themselves, his Hand controuls and guides them still. ---- To what serious and solemn Thoughts are we led by such a View as this ; when we attend not merely to the Actings of Men,

Men, but to the Ways of God ; deeply impress'd with the Belief, that we and all our Concerns are Parts of his great Administration !

2. FROM what has been said we see, that we ought not to be shaken in our Minds, by any present *seeming Disorders* of the World, so as on Account of them to think ill of Providence. Many Things, doubtless, there are, which appear as *Blemishes* in the general Order, to a superficial View ; and which, if we were to regulate the World, we think should have *no Place* in it. And yet, these various Instances, which we *see*, and can clearly *trace*, of the Workings of Passion and Wickedness, render'd subservient to worthy and good Ends, give us the highest Reason to conclude, that, in all other Cases of seeming Evil, the like Ends are promoted. This ought to satisfy our Minds, even where the Prospect is most *discouraging*, and the State of human Affairs most *dark* and *embroil'd*. The Schemes of Divine Wisdom are too *large* and *comprehensive*, to be discerned by us, in all their Extent, at one View ; and, where we see only by *Parts*, we must be often at a Loss to judge of the *Whole*. *The way of God is in the sea, and his*

his path in the great waters : his footsteps are not known (a). Although thou sayest thou canst not see him, yet judgment is still before him, therefore trust thou in him (b). His it is, to educe Good from Ill, Order from Confusion, his own just Praise from Man's Wrath. As in the natural World, there is no *real* Deformity ; nothing but what has either its own Ornament or Use : so, the most irregular and deformed *Appearances* in the moral World, shall be made to *heighten* the Beauty of the whole : And, in the End, *all* the Works of God shall appear to be perfect. God *binds* together the most opposite and disagreeing Principles in the Laws of universal *Concord* : and *adapts*, even the most harsh and discordant Notes, to the *Harmony* of his Goodness. As he hath rear'd the goodly Frame of Nature, from *various* and *jarring* Elements, and hath settled it in Peace ; so he hath formed such an *Union*, by his Providence, of the *more various* Interests, and *more jarring* Passions of Men, that they all *conspire* to his Glory, and *co-operate* for the general Good. --- How amazing is that Wisdom, which comprehends such infinite *Diversities*, and *Contrarieties*, with-
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(a) Psal. lxxvii. 19. (b) Job xxxv. 14.

in its Scheme ! How powerful that Hand, which *bends* to its own Purpose, the Good and the Bad, the Busy and the Idle, the Friends and the Foes of GOD ; which makes them *all* hold on their Course to his Glory, tho' *divided from one another* by a Multiplicity of Pursuits, and *differing often from themselves* ; and whilst they all move themselves at their *own Freedom*, yet, by a secret Influence, winds and turns them at *his Will* ! O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out (a) !

3. From what has been said, we see the greatest Reason for *entire Submission* to the Will of Heaven, amidst all Sufferings from the *Wrath* and Violence of Men. These befall us not *in vain* : they are not to be considered as mere Effects of the arbitrary *Pleasure* and *Will of Men* : nor are we to believe ourselves the *Sport* of *Fortune* and *Passion*. But, good Designs are *going on* : GOD is always carrying forward his *own Ends* : And if we are certainly assured that all is tending to *his Glory*, which is ever the same with the *general Good*, is not this a sufficient Reason for the

(a) Rom. xi. 33.

the most peaceable *Acquiescence* on our Part? Ought not we, as *Parts* of the *Whole*, cheerfully to resign our *private* Interest, to the Advancement of a *higher* and more *general* Good?----But moreover, by this Resignation, our *own Interest* shall suffer nothing in the Issue. For the greatest Happiness of *every* good Man, of *each Individual*, as well as of the *whole*, is comprehended in that *Praise* which the *wrath of man* is decreed to yield to God. ---Hence ought to arise, not unreluctant *Submission* only, but the most exalted *Joy* in the Divine Administration, to all who are pious and virtuous. In *all Events*, their Interest is secur'd; and the severest Trials of Life are to them Matter even of *Thankfulness* and *Gratitude*, when view'd in their just Light. For, in these very Trials, their Advantage is *consulted*; by them is their Good *promoted*; and the most hurtful Designs of the Wrath of Man are *converted* into *Benefits* and *Blessings*.---Let this be enough to reconcile our Minds to every Part of our Lot; and to establish them in the most comforting *Trust* and *Confidence*, in God, in the Way of our Duty.---*If God be for us, who, or what, can be against us?* He who can defeat all the Purposes of our *Enemies*,
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and transform their *intended Evil* unto *real Good*, is certainly the most powerful *Friend*: And if *his Wrath* be once appeas'd, there is no *other Wrath* from which we have ought to fear.

4. FROM all that has been said of the Conduct of Providence, let us observe, how much Reason there is for acknowledging with Thankfulness the Hand of GOD, in all these *Deliverances*, which we obtain from the *wrath of man*. As we ought never to forget, when we suffer by human Violence, that it is his Hand which *corrects* us; so, when that Violence receives a Check, we ought to remember, it is his Hand which *restrains* it. In *both* these, the *wrath of man*, either *permitted*, or *restrain'd*, praises GOD: and we have seen him remarkably prais'd in *both*.---Through all the Steps of our late *Sufferings*, and our present happy *Deliverance*, such a *Series* of Divine Wisdom hath appear'd, as must present, to the Observation of every *considering* Spectator, a very *beautiful Scene* in the History of Providence.---GOD beheld a Nation, whom he had favoured with long Tranquillity and Peace, sunk, by that Peace and Tranquillity, into *Luxury* and *Corruption of Manners*. He had bless'd them

them with a happy Constitution, a mild Government, and equal Laws ; but long Enjoyment had *deaden'd* their *Sense* of so invaluable a Blessing, and fed a *giddy* and *factious Spirit*. He had distinguish'd them with the purest Enjoyment of pure Religion above most Nations of the Earth ; but their religious Privileges, *once* struggled for with Zeal, began to be *contemn'd*, and their *first Love* to *cool*.--- Behold, how *opportunisty* God sent forth the *wrath of man*, to work a Cure for all these Evils ;--to shake *that Peace* which had fostered *Luxury* and *Impiety* under its Wings ; to threaten *that Religion*, and *that Government*, to the Blessings of which we had been insensible ; and to display before us these Terrors of *oppressive Power*, and *persecuting Religion*, to the Danger of which we had been laid asleep :---He made us *feel* the Value of all we should have lost ;---he made the Evil to grow *sudden* and *unexpected*, from amongst ourselves, and allowing it to proceed so far, as might be sufficient to *awaken* the Nation, and to render us *serious* and *wise*, he then gave a signal Check to the *wrath of man* ; and *restrain'd the remainder of it*, after it had gone the Length which he saw meet. Our Enemies boasted
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of the *Favour* and *Countenance* of Heaven : *Countenanced* they were by Heaven, but not for their *own Sakes* ; and the Success permitted them for a Time, was meant for the *Improvement* and *Benefit* of *those*, whom they intended to *destroy*. When the proper *Season* was come, for GOD to assert his own Cause, then he rais'd up an illustrious *Deliverer*, whom, for a Blessing to his Country, he had prepared against this *Time of Need*. HIM, he crowned with the Graces of his *Right-hand* : to the conspicuous *Bravery* of early *Youth*, he added that *Conduct* and *Wisdom*, which, in others, is the Fruit only of *long Experience* ; and distinguish'd Him with all those *Qualities* which render the *Man*, amiable ; as well, as the *HERO*, Great : He sent him forth to be the *Terror* of his Foes, the *Confidence* and *Love* of his Friends ; and, in the Day of Danger and Death, commanded the *Shields of Angels* to be spread around him !----What Heart, in which the Love of *BRITISH Liberty* remains, *warms* not at the Mention of his Name ?---Whose Bosom overflows not with *Gratitude*, when he looks back upon the late dark and melancholy Scenes of *Oppression* and *Terror*, and surveys the fair Prospect now open'd, by this

chosen *Instrument* of our Deliverance, of *Peace* restored, *Liberty* flourishing, and *Religion* safe?---Let us lift up our Eyes to Heaven, and say, *This is the doing of the Lord, and it is marvellous in our eyes (a)!*---HIM, the *wrath of man* hath indeed signally' *prais'd*, in our Land: *Prais'd* him, when it rag'd; and *prais'd* him, when it fell!---*When he arose, his enemies were scattered; as smoke is driven away, and as chaff before the wind.*---Give unto the Lord, ye mighty, give unto the Lord glory and strength (b)! He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in funder; he burneth the chariot in fire (c). His excellency is over Israel: his strength is in the clouds: He giveth strength and victory to his people (d).
---PRAISE ye the LORD.

(a) Psal. cxviii. 23. (b) Psal. xxix. 1.

(c) Psal. xlv. 9. (d) Psal. lxviii. 34, 35.

The END.

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